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ABSTRACT

The research paper examines how women's relative preferences for market work and home work are effected by three transitions: first marriage, first birth, and marital dissolution. The hypothesis was that all three events should affect market work preference by changing levels of available resources, such as time and money, and by changing the level of personal fulfillment derived from family life. Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Young Women, a causal model was developed measuring these effects in relation to several background and situational variables. Probit analysis indicated that first marriage decreases market work preferences through age 24 but not beyond that age, perhaps because concomitant changes in resources are less unexpected after than before that age. Marital dissolution tended to increase preference for market work at ages 19 through 29, probably by exposing women to financial insecurity. A first birth had no immediate impact, but was followed one to two years later by striking upward revisions in marriage and childbearing and increased probability of divorce led to increases in the level of preference for market work. Two recommendations are made: additional research including more detailed information on women's preferences and expectations before and after these events, and that the family-work conflict issues be raised in high school. (Author/CK)

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Young Women's Preferences for Market Work:

Responses to Marital Events

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ABSTRACT

Using data from the NLS Young Women Survey, we examine how women's relative preferences for market work and home work are affected by three transitions: first marriage, marital dissolution, and first birth. We argue that all three events should affect market work preferences by changing levels of available resources, such as time and money, and by changing the level of personal fulfillment derived from family life. Probit analysis indicates that first marriage decreases market work preferences through age 24 but not beyond that age, perhaps because concomitant changes in resources are less unexpected after than before that age. Marital dissolution tends to increase preference for market work at ages 19 through 29, probably by exposing women to financial insecurity. A first birth has no immediate impact, but is followed one to two years later by striking upward revisions in market work preferences. Implications of these results are discussed.

Introduction

Individual "tastes" or preferences are an important theoretical component of economic models of such behavior as childbearing (Becker, 1960; Easterlin, 1969), educational attainment (Bowen and Finegan, 1969; Cohen et al., 1970) and female labor force participation (Cain, 1966; Cain and Dooley, 1976; Lehrer and Nerlove, 1979). But measures of tastes rarely are included in empirical economic analyses of any of these subjects: economists tend to take tastes as a given, as data, to be explained by someone else (Stigler and Becker, 1977:76). This is especially the case in economic models of female labor supply. Since tastes are almost never measured directly or included, except through proxies, in economic analyses of women's labor force participation, we know relatively little about the role these preferences play in determining the amount of labor women supply to the market. Although the importance of tastes for employment in female labor supply has never been established, there are a number of reasons that preferences for market work are of interest in and of themselves. First and most obviously, these preferences may have some effect on when and whether an individual woman works for pay. Second, there is considerable evidence that tastes for work have important implications for other aspects of women's lives, some work-related, some not. Women who prefer market to home work over the long run tend to invest more in their human capital, both formal schooling and job training, than those who prefer home work (Sandell and Shapiro, 1978). Polachek (1979, see also Doescher, 1979) argues that women chose their occupations at least in part on the basis of their long-run preferences for employment and childbearing, seeking to match the two to minimize conflict between the wife-mother and worker roles. And there is considerable evidence that tastes for market work affect timing and number of children (Waite and Stolzenberg, 1976; Ross, 1973). Thus it is important to understand as much as possible about women's preferences for work in the market,

how these tastes develop and the conditions under which they change. In this paper we examine young women's stated, long-run preference for market versus home work; specifically, we explore the ways in which tastes for employment change in response to a first marriage, a first birth or a marital dissolution.

The late adolescent and young adult years are important in women's lives because this is when decisions about many lifetime activities are made: young women decide when and whether to form families; they decide on the amount, timing and kind of work they will do for much of their lives. Many of these decisions are irreversable and have important, long-term consequences. Tastes for market work held during the young adult years are one input into these lifetime decisions, and, we argue, change as a result of experiences during these years. Young women may revise their preferences for employment because of experience in school, as a result of the quality and extent of the early labor market experience (Spitze and Waite, 1980; Presser, 1971) or because of their reaction to the changes that occur when they first marry, become a mother or have a marriage dissolve. In this paper we focus on the effects on tastes for market work of the latter experiences, of what we call "marital events."

We expect these "marital events" to cause women to revise their relative preferences for work in the market and work in the home by altering (1) the psychic income or personal fulfillment that they receive from family life and, (2) the level of resources and psychic income that we argue are associated with each marital event, a first marriage, a first birth and a marital breakup, in turn. We begin our discussion with entry into wedlock.

Much of young girls' socialization in this society revolves around the anticipation of getting married and raising children. It would hardly be surprising if the wife and mother roles were less fulfilling than young women expect them to be. Bailyn (1970) hypothesizes that a "traditional dream" of fulfillment through marriage and motherhood may be destroyed by the reality.

If young women expect more satisfactions from being married than they receive, then when their expectations are not met they may seek fulfillment in other spheres, one of which may include gainful employment. Married women, even those who are employed, tend to do the vast majority of the housework (Walker and Woods, 1976), receiving relatively little help from their husbands. Since a new bride is suddenly responsible for the household maintenance for two adults instead of one, marriage probably results in a decrease in leisure time for the wife. But personal fulfillment through family life may increase upon marriage, even if the increase is not as large as many young women expect it to be. An increase in fulfillment could increase preference for work in the home over work in the market.

Marriage may increase a young woman's sense of financial security by giving her access to the earnings of another person, one who probably earns considerably more than she does, or who will in the long run. She is no longer solely responsible for her own financial support, although this is a burden that she may have shared with her parents before her marriage. But marriage may increase the short-run felt need for income since the costs of setting up a new household are considerable.

The arrival of a first child causes many of the same changes that a first marriage does -- an increase in the amount of work required in the home, and the collision of the traditional dream of fulfillment through motherhood with the reality of childcare -- but instead of increasing feelings of financial security, a first birth may decrease these feelings. The financial demands that parenthood places on a family, especially knowledge of the long-term costs of children, may make a woman cognizant of the future need for her earnings and thereby increase her taste for employment.

Marital dissolution tends to reduce a woman's financial security, we argue. On average, the economic situation of the wife worsens substantially

following divorce while that of the husband improves (Hoffman, 1977). This is the case because the couple loses the economies of scale realized by living together (Lazear and Michael, 1979) and the wife usually retains custody of the children. The low probability that alimony or childsupport will be awarded and paid consistently (Eckhardt, 1968; Jones et al., 1976) will tend to increase the woman's awareness that her own earnings are important for her financial security. Her long-term preferences for market work may increase as a result.

We will summarize our expectations about the responses of women's tastes for employment to marital events. We expect marital dissolution to increase relative preferences for market over home work since this event will tend to decrease women's financial security and the psychic income they receive from family life. Both of these changes should make gainful employment more attractive. Whether a first marriage or a first birth will raise or lower tastes for employment is an empirical question since there are forces operating in both cases to make market work both more and less appealing. The effect of the event may depend on initial preferences. It may also depend on the age at which the event occurs. We expect that the older the woman the more developed are her preferences for employment and work in the home and the less likely to change with a marital event. Older women should know more in general about the realities of marriage, parenthood and the stresses of divorce than their younger counterparts because they have had time to observe others in these situations and to evaluate their reactions.

To this point we have presented our reasoning about the responses of young women's market work preferences to marital events. In the next section we present a causal model of this process.

The Model

Thus far we have suggested that market work preferences will change with the occurrence of "marital events," that is, first marriage, first birth, or marital dissolution, due to resultant changes in available resources and sources of fulfillment. Levels of resources and amount of personal fulfillment are not explicitly measured in our analysis. Our model can be represented as Figure 1.

In this paper we focus only on the last stage of the model presented in Figure 1, the effect of a marital event on changes in tastes for paid employment. The occurrence of the marital events, initial preferences for market work and other characteristics of the woman are all taken as exogenous. Marital events are viewed as altering tastes directly. In fact, these effects could occur in any of three ways. Events could alter levels (means) of background variables; they could alter effects of background or situational variables (i.e., interaction effects); or they could have their own direct effects on preferences. Here we examine explicitly only the direct effect of marital events on tastes for employment, although we recognize that more complex effects may be operating to a small degree. Most background and situational variables measured here could not change with the event, since they are permanent characteristics of the woman or her family of origin. Situational variables such as employment and school enrollment could change relatively quickly in response to a marital event, and the effects of a marital event could vary according to original employment or enrollment status. Since this is a first test of this issue, we confine ourselves to the relatively simple model.

Our model is based on the further assumption that marital events are not caused by changes in preferences which occur between the beginning of the year and the time of the event; i.e. that causality runs only from the marital event during a year to preferences for employment at the end of the year. We feel

that there are theoretical reasons for our causal specification. Most marital events are planned and anticipated at least to some degree; their cuases operate over a long time frame. A woman not planning a marriage, divorce, or first birth, who had a "sudden" change in preferences for market work would be unlikely subsequently to plan and execute any of these events within less than a year. Much more plausible is a sequence in which the event occurs, perhaps partly as a result of preferences at the beginning of the year, which in turn may reflect anticipation of the event. Preferences are then altered in response to experience in the new state. In addition to these theoretical reasons, results for first birth (presented later) provide empirical evidence against an alternative model. This is the underlying causal process on which our model is based.

Our model requires data on tastes for work at two times as well as information on timing of marital events and on other characteristics of the woman. This model can be estimated only with longitudinal data on young women of the ages to be experiencing a first marriage, a first birth and marital dissolution. Large numbers of observations are required to provide enough cases with marital events. Fortunately data meeting these requirements are available and are described in the next section of the paper.

Data and Plan of Analysis

As we have shown above, without longitudinal data one can only speculate about the effects of family formation on preferences for market activity. As Presser (1971) points out, a woman may bear a child or avoid bearing a child at a given age because of her level of occupational or educational aspirations, but an unplanned early birth may curtail her job preparation prematurely. An analysis of the relation between age at first birth and later aspirations would not clarify which sequence of events had occurred. In order to test the impact of family formation events on preferences for employment, we need measures of these preferences before and after the period in question so we may determine what change has occurred due to the intervening event.

The necessary data are available in the National Longitudinal Survey of Young Women. Conducted by the Ohio State University Center for Human Resource Research, this survey includes yearly data on over 5000 young women over a recent five-year period. Personal interviews were conducted with a national probability sample of the noninstitutionalized female population age 14 to 24 in 1968, with yearly re-interviews through 1973. Attrition rates were low; 85.5% of the original sample were still being interviewed as of 1973.

A measure of preferences for market work versus home work was included in every wave of this survey. The young woman was asked what she would like to be doing at age 35, to which she could respond with an occupation or with "housewife." We code this as a dichotomy indicating whether the woman would or would not prefer to be doing market work. We argue that this question expresses her true preferences in a discretionary situation. Women are generally expected to work before their first birth and to stay home with young children for the first few years of the child's life. By age 35, however, for the average woman, all children are in kindergarten or grade school and most other mothers will,

at least, have no infants in the home (Glick, 1977). Any preschool-age children could be put in day care if the woman wants to hold a job, but since most women at this age will still have relatively young children, they have a legitimate "excuse" to stay home.

We wish to stress that this variable is interpreted here as a measure of current preferences. It is not known, nor is it crucial to know, whether it is a strong predictor of actual labor market participation at age 35. By referring to a time in the fairly-distant future, we avoid responses which would reflect constraints in the woman's current situation such as young children or a husband's low income, and we can tap the woman's true preferences in a hypothetical absence of such constraints.

Our strategy is to examine the effect on preference for market work of getting married, dissolving a marriage or experiencing a first birth during a one-year period,[1] with preferences and other relevant variables at the beginning of the year controlled.[2] Since we wish to examine these effects separately by age of the woman for whom the event occurs, we restructure the data onto observations on each respondent over a one-year period. The periods are separated by age of respondent at the beginning of the year. The NLS women were age 14 to 24 in 1968 and 19 to 29 in 1973, so observations on one-year transitions from 14 to 15 through 28 to 29 were available. The number of observations on each age differed considerably since, for example only those age 14 in 1968 experienced the 14 to 15 transition, while those anywhere from 14 to 18 in 1968 experienced the 18 to 19 transition sometime between 1968 and 1973.

Fifteen separate samples were created for two of the three transitions--those never married at each age and those childless at each age. For those currently married at each age, in the divorce analysis, twelve age groups starting at age 17 were created, since so few women aged 14 through 16 were

married. For economy and ease of reporting results, each of the three sets of samples of 12 to 15 age groups was then collapsed into seven groups (6 for divorce); for example, the 14 to 15 and the 15 to 16 transition samples were combined. To avoid problems of autocorrelation (Johnston, 1972), age groups were selected so that no woman was included in a given analysis more than once.[3]

The dependent variable in each of these analyses is preference for market work, which is coded as a dichotomy. An appropriate estimation technique for such equations is probit analysis (Hanushek and Jackson, 1977), a maximum likelihood technique based on the assumption that the underlying probability distribution is normal.[4] Given a probability interpretation of the predicted values of the dependent variable, a marginal change in probability should be most difficult to obtain when the probability is close to one of the limits, 0 or 1. Probit analysis allows the calculation of differing slopes, or differing levels of effects of independent variables, at varying levels of the predicted probability for the dependent variable (Vanneman and Pampel, 1977). It also constrains the predicted values of the dependent variable to fall between 0 and 1. Values outside this range are meaningless as probabilities, but may be obtained when ordinary least squares is used with a dichotomous dependent variable.

For cross-equation comparability, probit slopes can be reported at the same point along the curve, and can be interpreted similarly to unstandardized regression coefficients. Here we report all slopes at a probability level of .50, close to the mean level of preference for employment for all age groups and also the point of maximum slope along the curve.

The independent variables of major interest in all three analyses are dichotomies indicating whether or not a given event took place. For women never married at a given age, we examine the effect of a first marriage during the

year on preference for market activity at the end of the year. For women married at the beginning of a given year, we examine the effect on preference for employment of a marital dissolution (separation or divorce) during the year. It should be noted that we know only marital status at each time point. If a woman separates from her husband during the year but is living with him at the end of the year, or gets divorced and remarried during the year, we are unable to detect this. This will make our estimates of the effects of marital dissolution slightly conservative. For women childless at the beginning of a given year, we examine the impact of bearing a first child during that year on preference for work at the end of the year. For reasons which will be described shortly, we also look at the effect of a first birth on preferences for market activity two years later.

Control variables in each model reflect two kinds of factors--the woman's family background, which may be a causal antecedent of both preference for work and the timing of the events examined here, and relevant characteristics of the woman and her current situation at the beginning of the year. All equations include a control for the year from which beginning-of-year data were taken (coded from 1 = 1968 to 5 = 1972).

A measure of preference for market versus home work at age 35 was included in every wave of the NLS data, as we mentioned earlier. This question was asked in precisely the same way in every year, with the exception of a minor wording difference between the 1968 survey and all other years. Tastes for employment at the beginning of the year in question were included as a control in every equation predicting preferences at the end of the year. In every case, preferences at t_0 and t_1 were obtained via precisely the same question, with the minor exception just stated. Thus, in our analysis the effect of a marital event on tastes for employment at the end of a year measures the impact of a marital event on change in these tastes.[5]

Family background variables include mother's and father's education (coded in years), household head's occupational status (Duncan prestige scores), number of siblings, whether the mother worked when the woman was 14, whether two parents were present when she was 14 (both coded as dummy variables), region at age 14 (1 = south, 0 = other) and size of city in which she was reared (ranging from 1 = 3 million or more, to 8 = rural). Characteristics of the woman include race (coded 1 = black, 0 = other) and years of education completed. Employment and full-time school enrollment status are both dummy variables, coded 1 for employed or enrolled and 0 for other.[6] For the marital dissolution and marriage analyses, a dummy variable indicating the presence of children is included, and for the childbearing analysis, a dummy variable indicates whether the woman is currently married. For the marital dissolution analysis, four predictors, applicable to married women only, are included: age at marriage, own income, husband's income (coded in hundreds of dollars per year) and the ratio of own to husband's income. These latter four variables are not included in the childbearing analysis since that analysis includes unmarried women.

Results

Transition to marriage: As Table 1 indicates, the impact of a first marriage during a year on preference for market work at the end of that year is consistently negative from ages 14 through 22. Since the number of marriages in the 14 and 15 year old group is small, results for that group will not be discussed further, but the effects for the other age groups are striking. The likelihood that a young woman prefers market to home work at age 35 decreases from 10 to 20 percentage points upon first marriage.

While it is impossible to determine from this analysis what specific factors enter into this drop, we can speculate that on balance women experience un-

expected increases in financial security or decreases in time, the two major resources which both marriage and market work affect. Since between 80 and 90 percent of women who get married during a given year are going to school or working and since presumably very few quit either activity immediately, women may experience unexpected increases in total work responsibilities with the addition of housework to their other activities. Husbands typically do very little housework whether or not their wives work (Walker and Woods, 1976), although 80 percent of men will respond positively to a survey question stating that a man should share housework equally if his wife works full time.[7] Thus, women may be surprised by the actual division of household labor after marriage. If they foresee that the chances of increasing the husband's share of housework are small, they may begin to look forward to a time when they themselves will be responsible only for the housework and child care.

Marriage also complicates the woman's decision-making by creation of a new unit, the household. Her future work plans may become altered by unexpected positions taken by her husband. He may disapprove of market work for married women with young children, in a manner contrary to her own attitudes. His own work may require frequent moves, making the woman's career planning difficult.

Women who first marry beyond the age of 24 experience no change in preferences for labor force participation.[8] The explanation for this may lie in the increased knowledge women acquire regarding home and market work compatibilities as they age (Stolzenberg and Waite, 1977). As indicated by the effects of preferences for paid employment the previous year on current preferences, market work preferences remain somewhat consistent over time but are most stable beyond the age of 25. By this time a woman probably has gained adequate knowledge of how employment, marriage and childbearing can be combined and how she wishes to combine them. She has had time to participate in the labor force, and even if unmarried or childless herself, has watched friends make decisions

in these areas. So apparently, by age 24, the amount of new information gained by actually marrying is small enough not to alter a woman's basic orientation toward market activity.

While our major interest here is in the effects of marriage on market work preferences, two other highly consistent effects in Table 1 merit brief discussion. Any effect here will reflect changes during the one-year period in taste for employment, net of earlier tastes. Thus, the consistently positive coefficients of race reflect a tendency for black women to increase market work preferences more rapidly than do whites during the ages represented here. The negative impact of year (for all but one of the groups for which it is applicable) implies that market work preferences were increasing at faster rates earlier than later during the 1968-1973 period. This probably reflects a minor wording change in this item between 1968 and 1969, which increased favorable responses toward market work.

Transition out of marriage: The positive impact of marital dissolution on a young woman's preference for labor force participation is substantial--between 18 and 29 percentage points (see Table 2)--and tends to be higher the later it occurs. Not only does the experience of marital dissolution cause women to need to work and to prepare for future work (Mott and Moore, 1977; Hoffman, 1977), these results suggest that it increases their desire to work, perhaps as a route to financial self-sufficiency and fulfillment outside the home. There is no significant change in preference for market work following marital dissolution during the teen years, although the small sample sizes make the results suspect.

Transition to motherhood: A first birth leads to substantial changes in a young woman's life. Apart from experiencing an increased financial burden, she may stop work or school and spend much of the day at home for the first time in her adult life. The baby probably makes more demands on her time than

the mother has ever experienced from any one source. Since we were unsure whether the full impact of this change would be apparent within a short period, and since the demands and rewards of childrearing change rapidly during the first year, we estimated the effects of a first birth during a given year on preference for market activity at the end of that year and at the end of the next year. We found no significant impact of a first birth during a given year on changes in preferences for labor force participation during that year. This probably reflects the fact that most births are planned and anticipated. Most women giving birth during a given year will either be pregnant at the beginning of the year before or plan to become so. Thus tastes immediately following a birth are not significantly different from those held while anticipating the birth. This does, however, provide evidence for the causal ordering in our model. If the birth were caused by changed preferences after the beginning of the period, these changes would be apparent after the first year.

We now turn to changes in a young woman's preferences for market work between one and two years after she experiences a first birth. By this point, presumably, she has a clearer picture of how the birth has affected her situation. For women between ages 16 and 27 who experience a first birth, the probability that they prefer paid employment to home work is increased by 10 to 15 percentage points. This effect is consistently positive and is significant for six out of seven age groups. (See Table 3.) The coefficient for the 26 and 27 year age group is .13 and therefore consistent with those for other groups, although it is not significant due to sample size. A first birth is such a rare event for those in the youngest group that we have no confidence in the coefficient for that group.

Why should a first birth be followed by dramatically increased preference for market work while the impact of a first marriage is negative? Certainly the two events change a woman's life in different ways. Marriage generally

increases a woman's financial security, whether she plans to work or be supported totally by her husband. Her economic situation is not solely her responsibility after marriage. On the other hand, the addition of children to the family increases financial demands on the parents and may make the woman more cognizant than before of the need to bring money into the household.

The occurrence of a first birth continues to have an impact on a woman's preference for labor force participation up to about age 25, while marriage has no impact beyond age 23. These results may indicate that young women are less prepared for motherhood than for marriage. By age 23 women may be cognizant of the changes involved in getting married, while a first birth may be such a major change that it is impossible for a young woman to be prepared fully or to anticipate her reactions simply by observing the experience of others.

The positive impact of a first birth on preference for paid employment is consistent with the positive coefficients for the effect of child presence for currently married women (Table 2).[9] These coefficients imply that the impact of a first birth is not temporary--mothers of young children are more likely than others to increase tastes for employment. The increase in preference may reflect desire to get away from full-time child care, a recognition of financial needs engendered by children's presence, or timing effects. However, the results in Table 3 would seem to contradict the last interpretation; women in the oldest age category experience the greatest increase in preference for market activity despite the high probability that the youngest child will not be in school when the woman is age 35.

Since these equations contain controls for preference for market work in the previous year, effects of other variables reveal only the circumstances under which women's preferences may be revised in a relatively short period. The most striking of these is school enrollment. Probability of prefering market work to home work increases substantially--anywhere from 10 to 30 percentage

points--during a year in which a woman is enrolled in school. This is consistent with previous results on the effect of college attendance on market work preferences (Spitze, 1978). We also find that education tends to have a positive impact--smaller than that of school enrollment--on preference for employment.

Discussion

In this paper we have developed a causal model of changes in women's long-run tastes for paid employment. This model is based on the premise that women have a certain preference for market versus home work at the beginning of a year, and that during the year some women experience a marital event, which may be a first marriage, a first birth, or the breakup of an existing marriage. This marital event may then cause some of the women experiencing it to revise their relative tastes for employment and work in the home. We argue that changes in the level of such resources as time and money and changes in feelings of personal fulfillment that occur as a result of marriage, first birth or divorce are responsible for alterations in market work preferences. We test this model and our results are consistent with it. But the reader must keep in mind that we have not proved that this is the causal process which is operating; causation may run from changed preferences to marital events in some cases, although we argue that this causal ordering is quite unlikely. With that caveat in mind, we turn to a discussion of the implications of our results, if one accepts the causal model we have developed.

On the basis of results presented here, current trends toward postponement of marriage and child bearing and increased probability of divorce would lead one to expect increases in general levels of preference for market work in recent cohorts of women. The percent of young women in their early twenties never-married and the percent in their late twenties still childless has nearly doubled since 1960 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, (1976,/ 1978). If increasing numbers of

women postpone marriage to an age when it has no negative impact on preference for work, and many postpone childbearing to the age range when the positive impact is relatively high, the overall result should be higher levels of preference for market activity in current cohorts than for their predecessors. Further reinforcement of this trend should occur due to the recent upward swing in the divorce rate: approximately 40 percent of marriages currently contracted by women in their twenties are expected to dissolve (Glick and Norton, 1977).

However, although we have indirect evidence that levels of preference for labor force participation are increasing for recent cohorts of young women, we have no direct support for this contention. Sex-role attitudes are changing among women at all socioeconomic and educational levels (Mason et al, 1976), but whether these changes are reflected in preferences and plans for market behavior is an open question.

A related question concerns time lags for the measurement of change. In this research we have examined changes in preference for market work during a one-year period in which a first marriage or a marital dissolution occurs, or a two-year period in which a first birth takes place. While the changes measured here can be argued convincingly to be a direct result of the transition, we do not know whether the attitude change is permanent, or even whether it is likely to change in direction at a later point. It is possible, for example, that after a short early period (one or two years) of enjoyment of housework and increased preferences for home work, a woman who marries then revises her preference for labor force participation upwards. Similarly, the woman who divorces and experiences preference for paid employment may return to her previous preferences when, as is generally the case, she remarries (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1976).

Finally, we should point out that the results of this research are only a beginning in understanding the actual process of women's changing preferences for

market work.[10] For example, while the results from the childbearing analysis provide support for the existence of a "traditional dream" which is destroyed by the reality of a first birth, we do not know for sure that this is going on. Since our measure of preference for work is a dichotomy, it is impossible to determine whether market work preferences are "moderated" by the transition to marriage or motherhood. An interval-level measure would be necessary to detect this kind of effect.

The question we address in this paper could be answered more convincingly by research which includes more detailed information on women's preferences and expectations before and after these events. If it were known what actually occurs during this transitional period, it might be possible to provide young women with information regarding family-work conflicts earlier in their lives so that they could consider alternative strategies. Since a decision to prepare for a career ideally is made early in a young woman's life, the question of how she will combine work and family roles without restricting later work prospects should be raised before family formation--for example, in high school courses or by high school guidance counselors. If these issues were raised early in a young woman's life, along with provision of the requisite information, the onset of marriage or motherhood might cause fewer sharp revisions in preference for labor force participation. Certainly the later in life these revisions occur, the more time is lost for job-preparation or wasted in preparation for a career or job which is later discarded.

Footnotes

[1]Since early adulthood is a period when a variety of new experiences occur, and tastes and attitudes may change rapidly in response to these events, we chose a one-year period over a larger period during which effects of various events might be difficult to determine.

[2]This issue of the appropriate length of the lag between the occurrence of a marital event and preferences for market work is of theoretical and methodological importance. Marriages and births, and probably marital dissolutions, are planned in advance so some adjustment of tastes for employment may take place in anticipation of the new status and would be reflected in preferences at t_0. This would bias the effect of a marital event on preferences at t_1, net of preferences at t_0, toward being too small and make our estimate of this effect conservative. But we argue that it is the experience in the new status, either wife, mother, or divorcee, that causes changes in tastes for employment and that the experience may be quite different than was anticipated. We chose to focus on a one-year period to: (1) reduce the probability that intervening events cause changes in work preferences; (2) observe the short-run impact of a marital event. The long-run effect of a marital event on tastes for employment is of interest but is outside the scope of our analysis.

[3]This selection was not random, but the inclusion of data on a given woman one year rather than another was unrelated to whether she married in either year. For example, in the analysis of the 20-to-21 transitions, data on the 20-to-21 transition was included for those women ages 16, 18 and 20 in 1968, and data on the 21-to-22 transition for those ages 17, 19 and 21 in 1968.

[4]A similar technique, logit, assumes a logistic distribution. Logit and probit are very similar, with small differences in the tails of the distribution (Hanushek and Jackson, 1977:204).

[5]One reader of this paper suggested that we estimate the model using first differences. This would involve using as the dependent variable the difference between preferences at t_0 and t_1 and as independent variables changes in circumstances (for example in marital status or parenthood) during the year. Regression of first differences is a solution to the problem of serial correlation in the error term of an equation estimated with ordinary least squares. Serial correlation of errors violates the assumption of independence of errors upon which OLS depends (Wonnacott and Wonnacott, 1970:136-140). However, we estimate our model with probit analysis, a maximum likelihood technique. It is not clear that estimating first difference equations is a solution to the problem of serially correlated error terms, if such a problem exists in this case. For this reason we have chosen to estimate the effect of a marital event on work preferences at t_1 net of the effect of work preferences at t_0.

[6]While a measure of whether the woman is living independently of her parents would be desirable, this information is not available in these data. Women going to college away from home are coded as living with their parents.

[7]Joan Huber found this result in a national probability sample of married men in 1978.

[8]Results for women 26 to 28 should be viewed cautiously due to small sample sizes.

[9]It should be kept in mind here that these results are from two different sets of equations and samples.

[10]We should also point out that preferences for market work are only one of a complex set of factors which influence women's labor market behavior. Other factors such as family income, child care availability, local labor market conditions, and husband's attitudes will affect employment decisions and may interact with preferences in affecting employment behavior. We recognize the complexity of this process; however, that complexity is not the focus of this study.

Figure 1 Causal model of effects of marital events on young women's preference for market work.

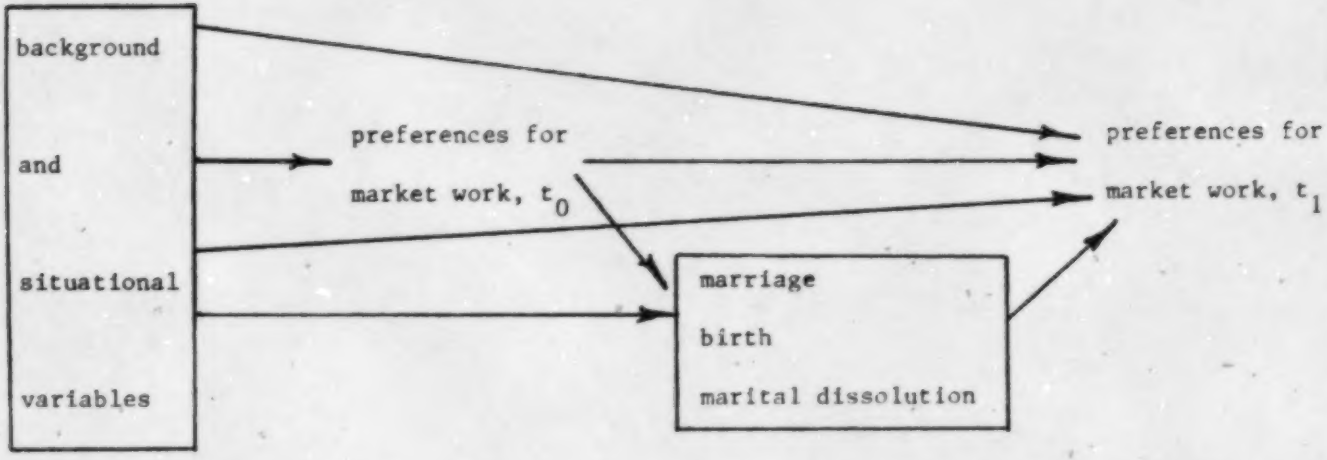

Table 1. Effect of First Marriage and Control Variables on Preference for Market Work[a]

Independent Variables	Age at Beginning of Year 14-15	16-17	18-19	20-21	22-23	24-25	26-28
Marriage during the year	-.509*	-.203*	-.111*	-.102*	-.143*	-.019	.016
Earlier preference for market work	.512*	.611*	.570*	.633*	.617*	.594*	.851*
Education	-.067*	.026*	.001	-.010	.015*	.023*	.019
Enrollment	.051	-.039	.133*	.133*	.276*	-.064	1.128
Employment	-.087*	-.006	-.032	-.050	-.101	-.173**	.074
Kids	.087	-.102	.047	-.042	-.020	-.107	-.105
Intact	-.065	.035	-.065*	-.048	.022	-.061	.246
Mother ed	-.011*	.011*	.011*	.010	-.004	.009	.020
Father ed	.015*	-.005	-.003	.006	-.018*	-.015	.035*
City size	.009	-.010*	.011*	.013*	.017*	-.008	-.016
Head occ	-.001	-.000	-.001	-.001	-.000	.002	-.001
Race	.313*	.136*	.116*	.117*	.129**	.152	.265
# siblings	-.020*	.001	-.019*	.002	.012	.022	.011
Year	--	-.106*	-.034*	-.027*	-.041*	.001	--
Region	-.045	-.002	-.051	.012	-.141*	-.045	.073
Probability of marriage	.01	.08	.16	.20	.20	.12	.14
Variance explained	.35	.37	.39	.42	.44	.40	.64
N	904	1793	1975	1380	715	316	131

[a]Probit slopes at p = .50. * $p < .05$ ** $.05 < p < .10$

Table 2. Effect of Marital Dissolution and Control Variables on Preference for Market Work[a]

Independent Variables	Age at Beginning of Year					
	17-18	19-20	21-22	23-24	25-26	27-28
Divorce during the year	-.021	.173**	.046	.236*	.208*	.291*
Earlier preference for market work	.487*	.596*	.574*	.600*	.702*	.703*
Education	.029	.047*	.011	.017*	.032*	-.001
Enrollment	.185	.147	.229*	.250**	-.405*	1.535
Employment	-.252*	-.047	.013	-.031	.003	.046
Kids	.218*	.101*	-.045	.141*	.167*	.137**
Intact	-.009	-.084	.012	.009	.023	-.008
Father ed	-.005	.004	.010	.006	.010	.006
City size	.012	.007	-.018*	-.006	-.019*	.014**
Race	-.032	.139	.093	.099	.148	-.062
Year	-.021	-.024**	-.022**	-.014	--	--
Age married	.001	-.002	.001	.000	-.003	-.002**
Income	.008	.002	-.003*	-.000	.001	.000
H income	.002	.001	.001*	-.000	.000	.000
Ratio own/H	.006	.009	.040*	.044*	.013	.006
Region	.023	-.046	-.033	-.030	-.128	-.193
Probability of divorce	.09	.04	.06	.04	.04	.03
Variance explained	.35	.39	.40	.40	.51	.50
N	221	726	904	1167	544	499

[a]Probit slopes at p = .50. * p < .05 ** .05 < p < .10

Table 3. Effect of First Birth and Control Variables on Preference for Market Work[a]

Independent Variables	Age at Beginning of Year						
	14-15	16-17	18-19	20-21	22-23	24-25	26-27
First birth during the year	1.522*	.150*	.151*	.122*	.104*	.121**	.133
Earlier preference for market work	.459*	.343*	.363*	.381*	.379*	.406*	.438*
Education	-.050*	.022*	.025*	.003	.021*	.023*	.041*
Enrollment	.209*	.042	.162*	.106*	.141*	.296**	.118
Employment	-.066**	.014	-.038**	.004	.067*	.124*	.066
Intact	-.105*	.014	-.042	-.037	-.034	-.011	.105
Mother ed	-.019*	.002	.001	.014*	.004	-.017*	.013
Father ed	.015*	.003	.003	.012*	-.004	.012	.010
City size	.011**	.002	.012*	.010*	.008**	.000	.021
Head occ	.001	.000	.000	-.001	-.001	.000	.000
Race	.319*	.162*	.098**	.067	.076	.112	.275**
Mother work	.094*	.060*	.013	.107*	-.024	.100*	.001
# siblings	-.019*	-.007	.002	-.003	.020*	.007	-.029
Year	--	-.055*	-.026*	-.019**	-.031*	.042**	--
Region	-.058	-.012	-.034	.032	-.112*	-.114*	-.249*
Marital status	-.400**	.056	-.020	-.054**	.066**	.056	-.022
Probability of first birth	.01	.06	.08	.10	.13	.11	.11
Variance explained	.31	.17	.25	.25	.26	.29	.42
N	921	1803	1975	1484	984	471	147

[a]Probit slopes at p = .50. * p < .05 ** .05 < p < .10

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